

orb: everything is done to beguile the feeling of his being a "stranger and a pilgrim on the earth." The relation which our nature bears to the circumstances of the present state, and which individuals bear to one another, is mainly the ground on which their considerations of duty proceed and conclude. And their schemes of happiness, though formed for beings at once immortal and departing, include little which avowedly relates to that world to which they are removing, nor reach beyond the period at which they will properly but begin to live. They endeavour to raise the groves of an earthly paradise, to shade from sight that vista which opens to the distance of eternity.

Another article in which the anti-christian tendency of a great part of our productions of taste and genius is apparent is, the kind of consolation administered to distress, old age, and death. Things of a mournful kind make so large a portion of the lot of humanity, that it is impossible for writers who take human life and feelings for their subject to avoid, (nor indeed have they endeavoured to avoid,) contemplating man in those conditions in which he needs very benignant aid to save him from despair. And here, if any where, we may justly require an absolute coincidence of all moral instructions with the religion of Christ: since consolation is eminently its distinction and its design ; since a being in distress has peculiarly a right not to be trifled with by the application of unadapted expedients ; and since insufficient consolations are but to mock it, and deceptive ones are to betray. It should then be clearly ascertained by the moralist, and never forgotten, what are the consolations provided by this religion, and under what condition they are offered.

Christianity offers even to the irreligious, who relent amidst their sufferings, the alleviation springing from inestimable promises made to penitence : any other system, which should attempt to console them, simply as suffering, and without any reference to the moral and religious state of their minds, would be mischievous, if it were not* inefficacious. What are the principal sources of consolation to the pious, is immediately apparent. The subjects of adversity and sorrow are assured that God exercises his paternal wisdom and kindness in afflicting his children : that this necessary discipline is to refine and exalt them by